

# *Storytelling your thesis*

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FMHHS Faculty Director - Master of Research

“Science is not  
finished until it’s  
communicated”

Sir Mark Walport  
(former UK Government  
Chief Scientific Advisor)

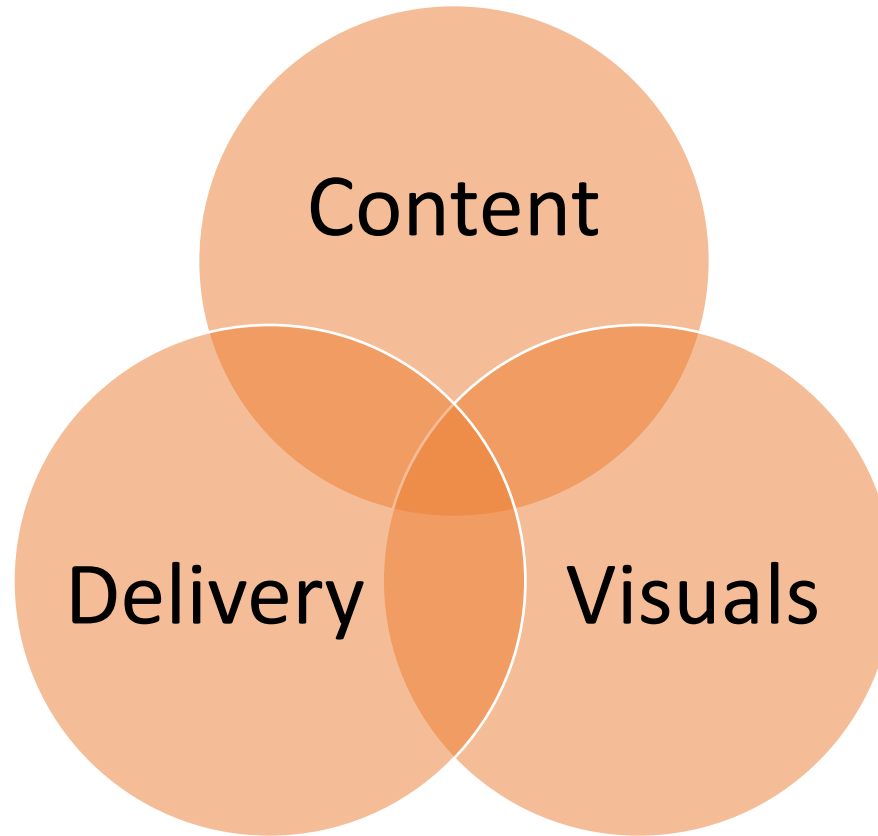


Graduate Research Academy  
Lincoln Bldg, 16 Wally's Walk, Level 2

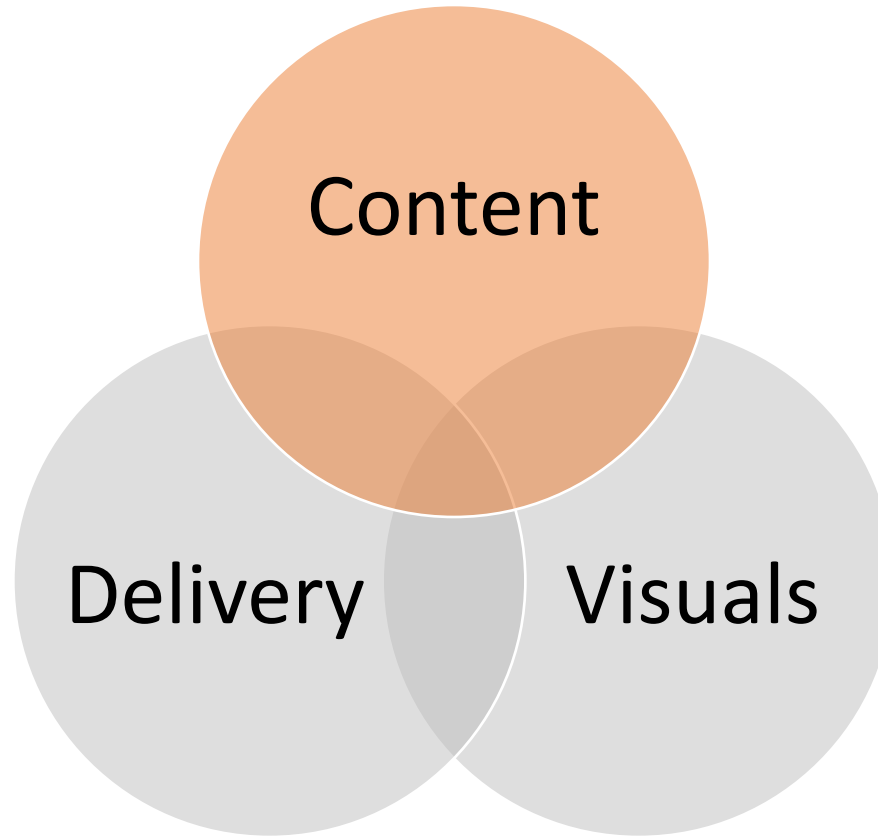
# Why enter

- Develop skills:
  - effective communication
  - information and digital literacy
  - visual story telling
- Helps you see the bigger picture of your thesis
- Distil the essence of your research into a succinct and engaging sound bite

# What can make/break a presentation?



# What can make/break a presentation?

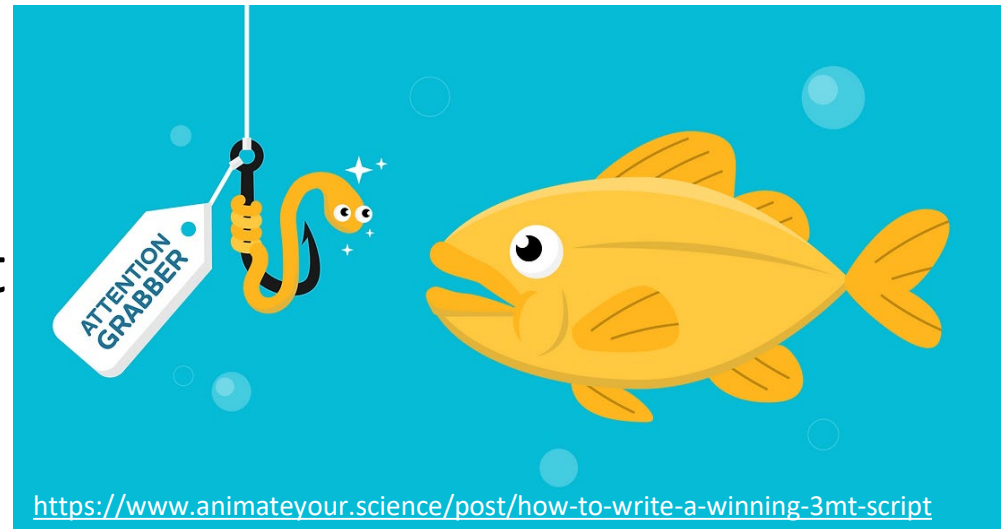




## Engaging your audience

Present your research problem in an accessible & *immediately understandable* way

- Start **specific & concrete**
- Highlight a **surprising** fact



# Some suggestions for the hook

Everyday phenomena: *Have you ever wondered why ...*

A hypothetical scenario: *Imagine if you...*

Direct advice: *If you're thinking of X, (don't) do Y!*

Conduct an informal survey: *Hands up if you...*

Shocking statistics/facts: *Did you know that...?*

A common misconception: *I always assumed ... BUT ...*

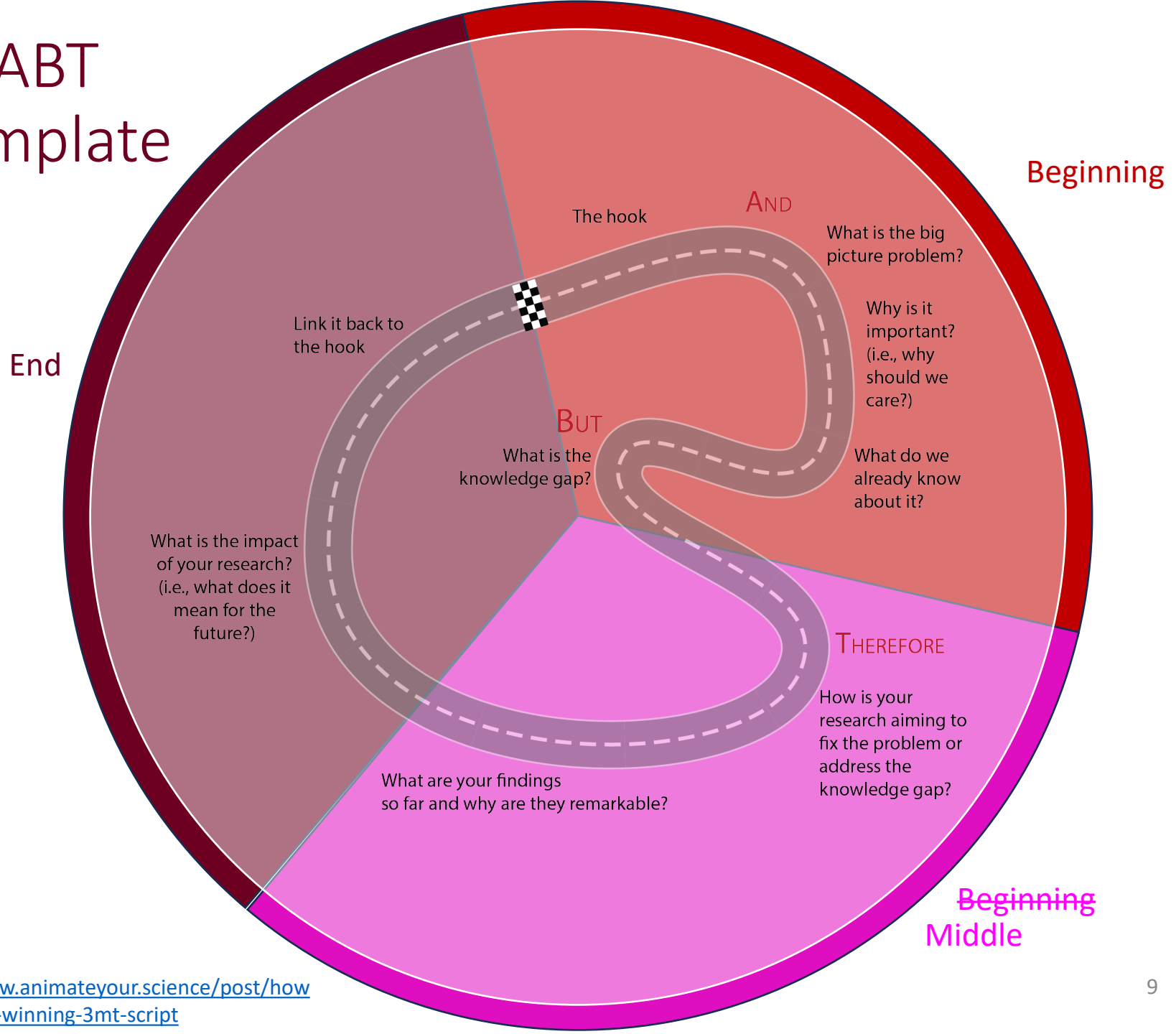
A paradox: *Why is it that ...*

Take 2 minutes now to think  
AFRESH about your research.  
Finish one of these suggestions

# Tell them a story



# ABT Template

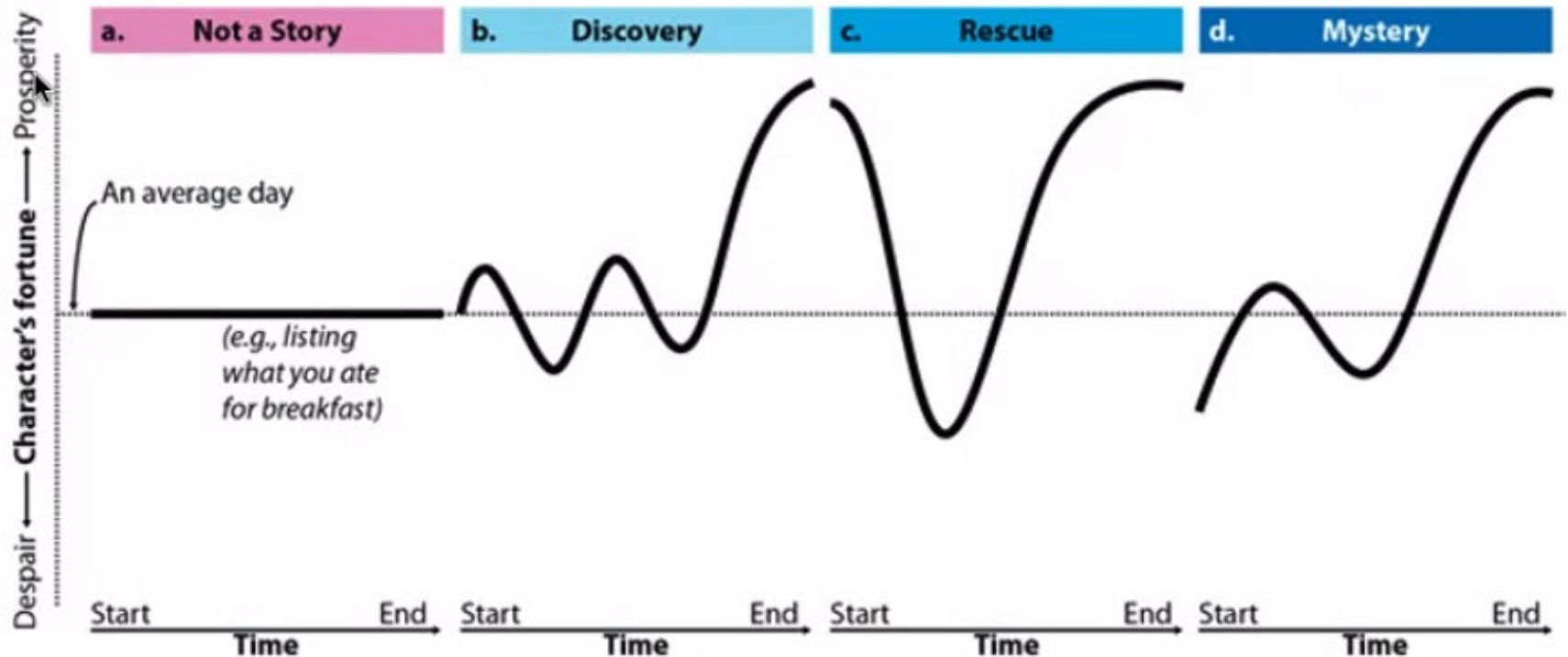




# Play with different 'genres'

- **AND: SET UP - BACKGROUND**
  - **BUT: PROBLEM - CONFLICT - DRAMA**
  - **THEREFORE: JOURNEY -> SOLUTION**
- \*SOURCE: DR. RANDY OLSON

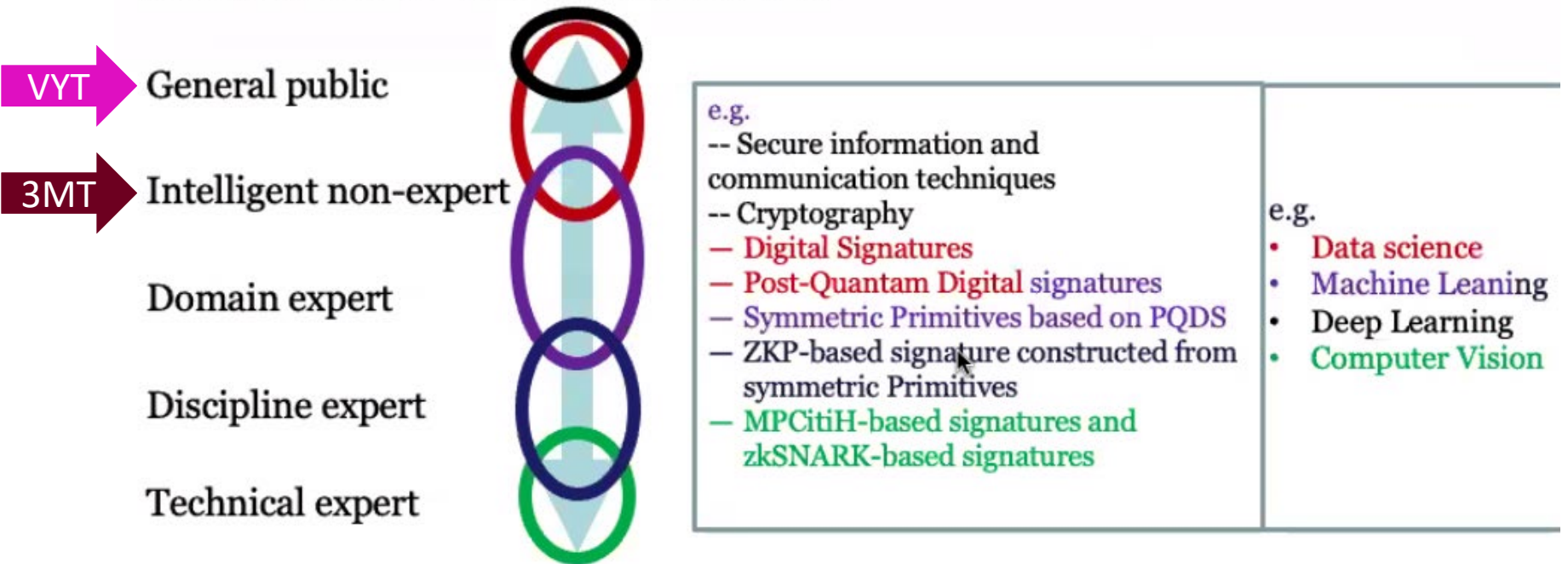
<https://www.animateyour.science/post/tell-them-a-story-how-to-avoid-the-standard-boring-presentation>



[Nicola Rivers: Everything not saved will be lost](#)

# Use simple language

**Audience level – find the right entry point**



[Nicola Rivers: Everything not saved will be lost](#)

# Use simple language

My research	My video
Murray River Rainbowfish and Western Rainbowfish	"fish"
Cryopreservation of testis and ovarian tissue	"freeze "reproductive tissue"
<i>In vivo</i> (via transplant) and <i>in vitro</i> (via cell culture) production of sperm and oocytes	Visual of cell division → making new fish



# The Title

- Doesn't have to be your thesis title  
Eg “Structures and features in complex visual stimuli: assisting identification in forensics” →  
“Suspects, Science and CSI”
- Informative but accessible  
“The paradox of listening to sad music”
- Colloquialisms and questions permissible  
“Do children with autism have an inner voice?”
- Can be technical  
“The Role of Epithelial-Mesenchymal Transition (EMT) in the pathogenesis of Obliterative Bronchiolitis (OB) in Lung Transplant Recipients”

# Title examples

Thesis: The area of Pylons Four, Five and Six at Karnak Temple: assessing the architecture, sequence of construction and ensuing historical implications

3MT: Reconstructing the Experience of the Ancient Egyptian Karnak Temple

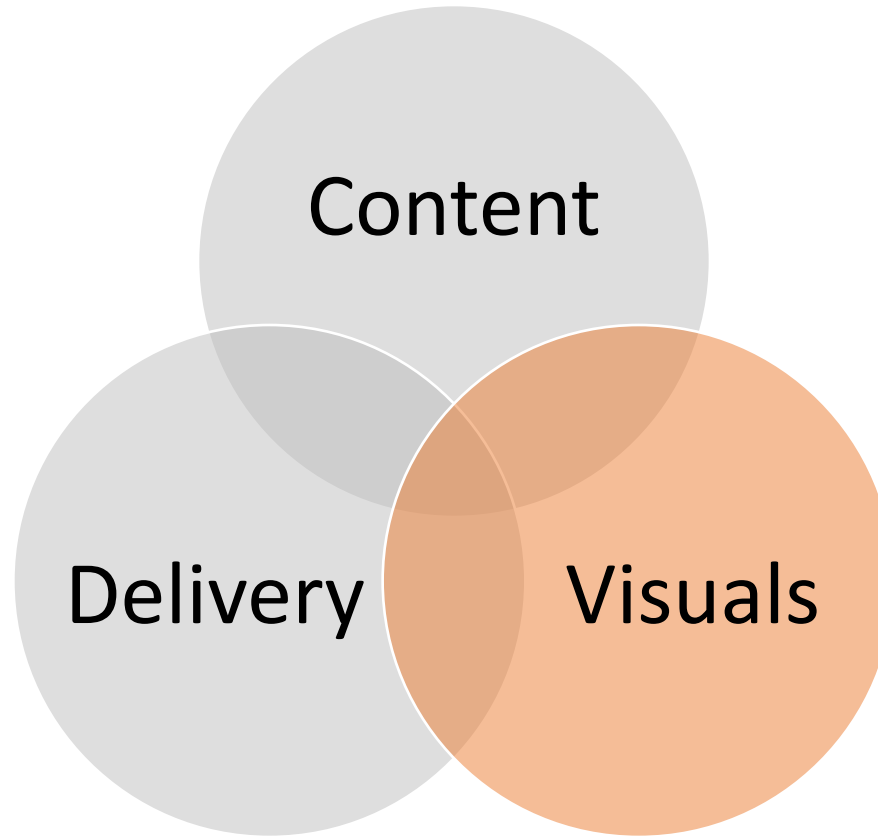
Gillian Smith (Winner MQ Final, 2019)

Thesis: Decoding hidden language: towards a reliable neural assessment of language comprehension in minimally-verbal autistic children

3MT: Can the brain speak when the mouth cant?

Selene Pitt (Winner MQ Final, 2018)

# What can make/break a presentation?



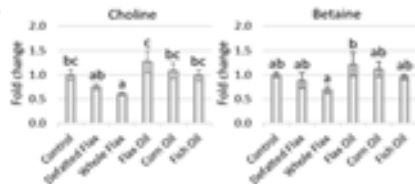
# Do not info dump

## FLAXSEED'S PARADOXICAL ROLE IN INCREASING THE LIFESPAN AND REPRODUCTIVE CAPACITY OF WHITE LEGHORN LAYING HENS

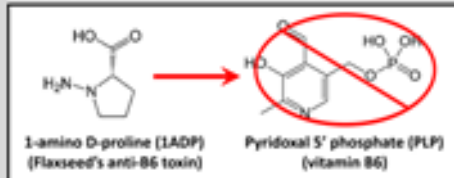
William Chris Weston (PhD Candidate)  
Dept: Molecular, Cellular & Systemic Physiology  
Mentor: Dr. Dale B. Hales



### Phospholipid-derived one-carbon donors

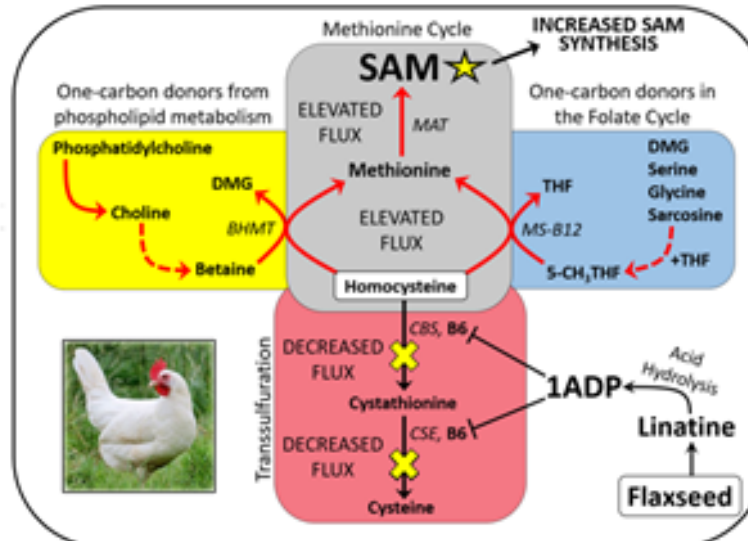
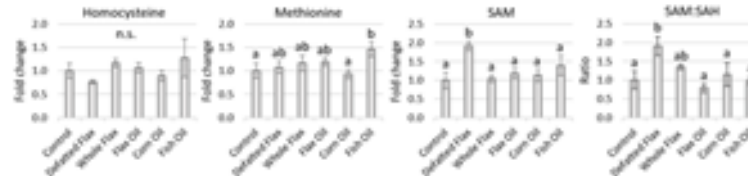


### BACKGROUND AND METHODS:



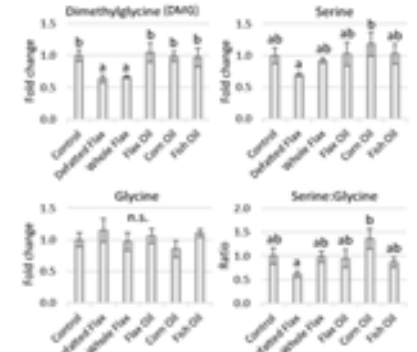
White Leghorn laying hens ( $n = \sim 168$  hens per group) were supplemented with different dietary constituents (e.g. defatted flaxseed or whole flaxseed) for 325 days. Blood plasma metabolites were analyzed via liquid chromatography tandem mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS), in order to evaluate one-carbon metabolism in hens. Daily survival and egg laying were also monitored by diet group.

### Methionine cycle metabolites



**CONCLUSION:** Flaxseed (via the action of 1ADP) induces a strong transsulfuration perturbation that reverses homocysteine flux, causing increased consumption of one-carbon donor molecules, increased SAM synthesis and increased methylation capacity in the hen. The associated outcomes are improved lifespan and/or increased daily egg laying. Flaxseed is a new form of nutritional biotechnology.

### Folate Cycle-derived one-carbon donors



### Survival and egg laying performance

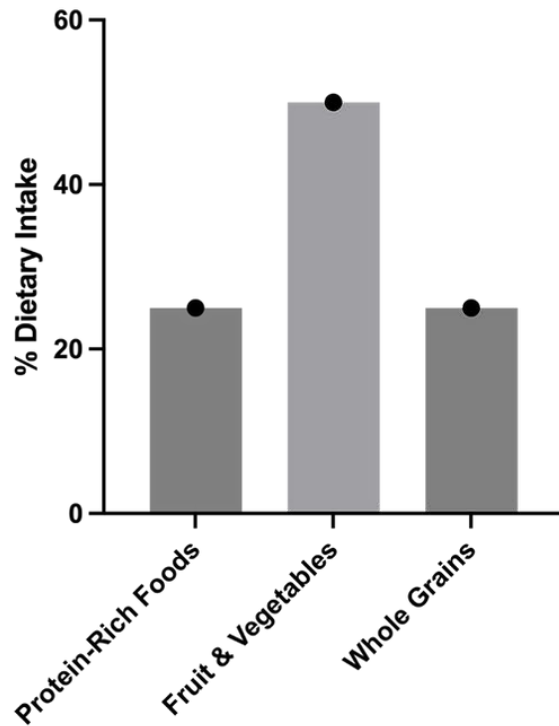
Diet	Survival			Daily eggs per hen
	Total survival (%)	Starting hens (n)	Surviving hens (n)	
Defatted Flax	71.4%	161	115	0.384 <sup>a</sup> ± 0.005
Control	67.6%	182	123	0.365 <sup>a</sup> ± 0.004
Whole Flax	66.5%	161	107	<b>0.401<sup>a</sup> ± 0.005</b>
Fish Oil	65.5%	165	108	0.394 <sup>a</sup> ± 0.005
Flax Oil	64.0%	161	103	0.339 <sup>a</sup> ± 0.005
Corn Oil	61.7%	175	108	0.335 <sup>a</sup> ± 0.004
Average	66.1%	168	111	0.376 ± 0.005

Statistical values determined by one-way ANOVA and Duncan's multiple range post-test (p < 0.05). ± SEM.

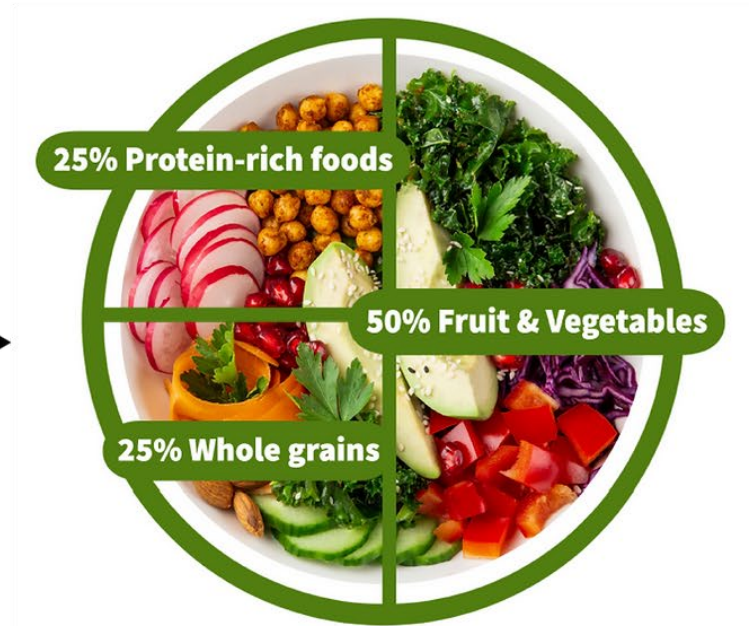


# Amplify and Simplify

**From this...**



**...to this!**





# Keep it simple

“I am Lucy and I have so much to say.

Amazingly I was rescued from silence ...”

- Lucy, aged 8 years

# Make it relevant to the story

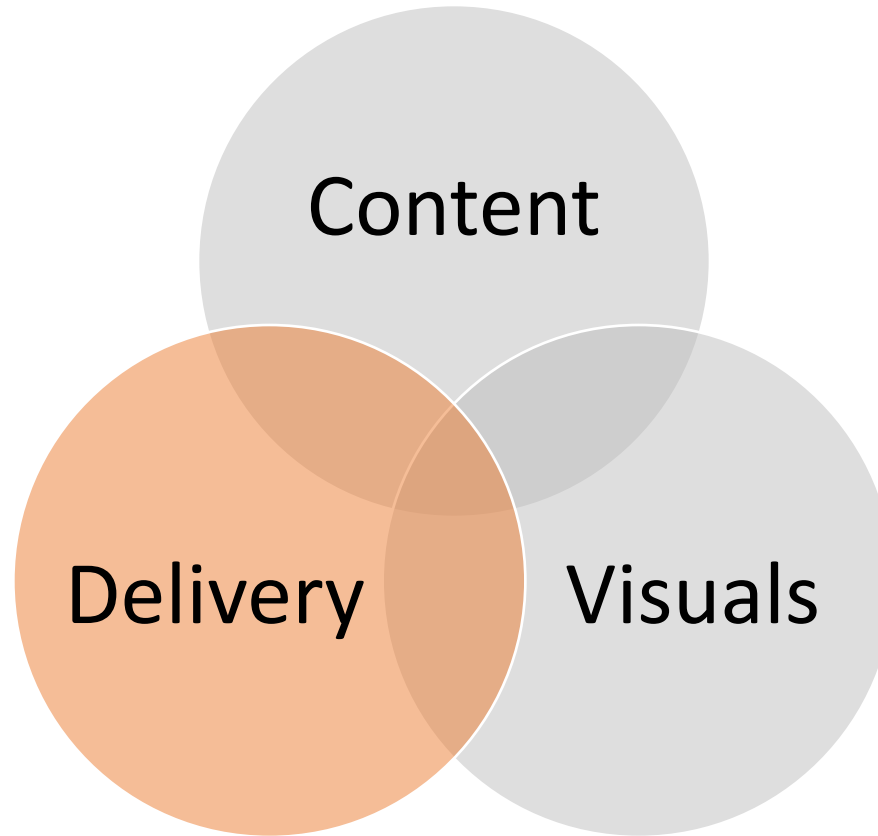
**TheRealGrandma**  
@GrandmaLRR  
San Francisco, CA  
Joined September 2017  
Born on November 21, 1966

**Grandma**  
@Grandma09441127  
Little red riding hood's grandma  
Joined July 2018


**NOT A WOLF**  
@SICKOPWOLVES  
COFFEE LOVER. GRAPHIC DESIGNER.  
DEFINITELY NOT A WOLF PRETENDING  
TO BE A MAN. @ITSDANSHEEHAN  
NOT THE WOODS  
etsy.com/shop/NOTAWOLF  
Joined August 2013

**Trust  
Evaluation  
on Twitter**

# What can make/break a presentation?



# Use voice modulation to engage the audience

 Indicates	Pitch	Tone	Volume	Pace
	<i>mood</i> <i>attitude</i> <i>intention</i>	<i>personality</i> <i>mood</i> <i>attitude</i>	<i>confidence</i> <i>energy</i> <i>interest</i>	<i>excitement</i> <i>nervousness</i> <i>boredom</i>
	<b>High</b>	<b>Loud</b>	<b>Loud</b>	<b>Fast</b>
	Excitement Surprise Curiosity	Enthusiasm Urgency Anger	Passion Importance Emphasis	Excitement Urgency Enthusiasm
	Neutrality Balance Clarity	Confidence Clarity Professionalism	Balance Clarity Respect	Balance Clarity Professionalism
	Authority Seriousness Calmness	Intimacy Sincerity Gentleness	Intimacy Secrecy Suspense	Importance Seriousness Calmness
	<b>Low</b>	<b>Soft</b>	<b>Soft</b>	<b>Slow</b>



Sweep the audience, or  
look at the camera, don't  
read (3MT)

Not too rigid, not too nuts

135-160 word per minute

**EYE  
CONTACT**

**GESTURE**

**PACE**

**CONFIDENCE  
PRACTISE**

**CONTENT**

# 3MT or VYT feedback and practice

Book a personalised feedback or discussion session on your 3MT or VYT presentation with a Graduate Research Development Advisor:



Dr Francesca Mataraga (HASS)  
[francesca.mataraga@mq.edu.au](mailto:francesca.mataraga@mq.edu.au)



Dr Frank Song (HASS)  
[frank.song@mq.edu.au](mailto:frank.song@mq.edu.au)



Dr Chris Bilsland (Professional Development)  
[christine.bilsland@mq.edu.au](mailto:christine.bilsland@mq.edu.au)



Dr Megan Brewer (STEMM)  
[megan.brewer@mq.edu.au](mailto:megan.brewer@mq.edu.au)

Away 29 June – 21 July

GRD Team Email  
[gr.development@mq.edu.au](mailto:gr.development@mq.edu.au)



# Examples



Ratanapat Suchat

Brand Nostalgia: The Emotional Responses of Thai Students  
Studying in Australia to Thai Condiment Packaging

PhD, Year 2

School of Design, Swinburne University of Technology

 0000-0002-5389-0049

©Ratanapat Suchat 2021



*presented by*








**Nicola Rivers**

**“Everything not saved will be lost”**

PhD, Final Year

Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology

 0000-0003-0533-3480

 @NicRivers\_

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your thesis™**

*presented by*



# **Winner of the 2021 Macquarie Competition: Hamid Yahyaei** from the Department of Applied Finance (MQBS): Where does money come from?

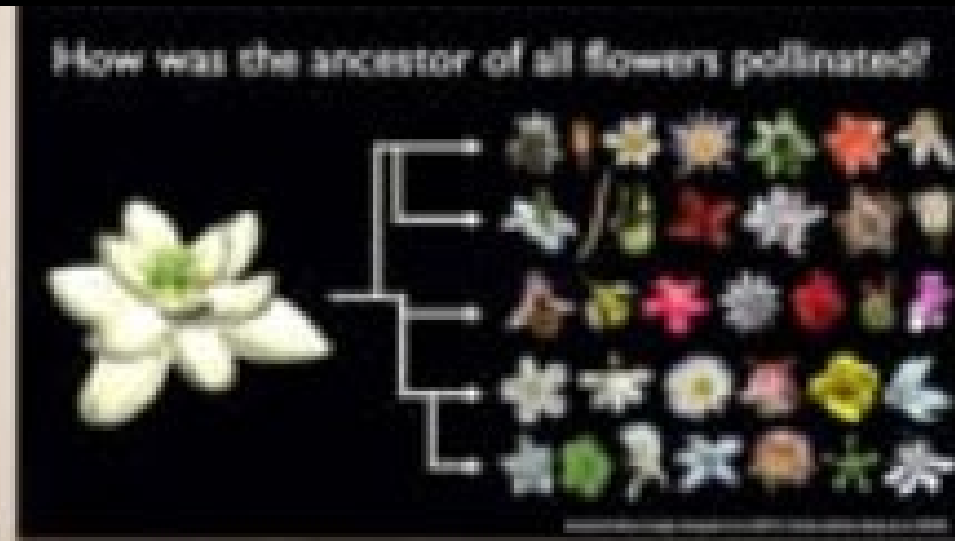


## **Hamid Yahyaei**

Department of Applied Finance  
Macquarie Business School  
Macquarie University

*Where Does Money Come From?*

**Winner of the 2022 Macquarie Competition: Ruby Stephens** from the School of Natural Sciences (FSE): How was the ancestor of all flowers pollinated?





**MACQUARIE**  
University

# Questions?

Megan Brewer, PhD

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(STEMM)

Graduate Research Academy

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